

1. Claims 19-36 are cancelled, without prejudice, for prosecution within a continuation or continuation-in-part application.
2. Applicants thank the examiner for the assistance given within the personal interview of 12/4/02. At the examiner's suggestion, new claims have been submitted that better define the existence of data tables and a relational database architecture. As it was further mentioned at the interview that system and software claims may be also be used to better define the invention, such claims are presented in lieu of the previous method claims.
3. New system claims 37-52, and related software claims 53-54, are directed to the embodiment of the application primarily depicted within Figures 9G and 10A, and provide a system (and software which may be used within the system) which is related to the prior method claims, i.e., the prior methods could be performed by using the currently claimed system and software..
3. New claims 37-52 are patentable over the prior art of record because the closest prior art, Nakamura ('789), fails to disclose, or render obvious in any proper combination, a system for the correspondent-centric management of e-mail messages which uses the three linked data tables of claim 37, and especially the correspondent table of step b, to enable the correspondent-centric management of e-mail by an e-mail user. Software claims 53-54 are based on the new system claims, and are similarly patentable over the prior art of record.
4. It is submitted that existing e-mail systems use a flat-file system for handling e-mail, while the currently claimed system utilizes relational databases to organize and store information relating to various parts of received and sent e-mails. The claimed e-

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mail system possesses many advantages over prior art systems, as is listed, e.g., on pages 11-12 of the instant specification. Exemplary of such advantages are:

1) the elimination or reduction of junk e-mail through the use of "positive spam filtering" which is easy to use, and is much more effective and efficient than the "negative" filters (i.e., those that exclude e-mails) of the prior art..

2) the ability to reduce hard drive space required for storage of e-mails on both end-user "client" systems and server systems.

3) the use of a relational database structure enable the ability to view consolidated information about correspondence history with a given correspondent, without having to organize sent and received e-mails manually, or by sorting and retrieving information from an existing "Inbox" or "Outbox".

5. If allowable subject matter is found within this application, the examiner is encouraged to contact Richard Ward at 781-316-0118 or via e-mail for the purpose of making arrangements to place the application in condition for allowance. The examiner is also encouraged to call or e-mail if he has any questions or comments regarding this submission.

Respectfully submitted,



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received e-mail messages within the message data table to correspondent records within the correspondent data table,

wherein message-correspondent relationship records within the message-correspondent relationship data table include message identification fields which relate to message records stored within the message data table, and wherein message-correspondent relationship records within the message-correspondent relationship data table further include correspondent identification fields which relate to correspondent records within the correspondent data table.

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~~38~~. (New) The system of claim ¹~~37~~, wherein the system further comprises an e-mail box data table for the storage of e-mail box records, said e-mail box records including at least an e-mail box identification field.

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~~39~~. (New) The system of claim ²~~38~~, wherein correspondent records and message-correspondent relationship records include e-mail box identification fields which are also located within e-mail box records in the e-mail box data table, thus permitting the use of multiple e-mail boxes within the system.

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~~40~~. (New) The system of claim ³~~39~~, wherein the system further comprises a user data table for the storage of user records which each provide information about an e-mail user, said user records including at least a user identification field.

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~~41~~. (New) The system of claim ⁴~~40~~, wherein e-mail box records, correspondent records and message-correspondent relationship records include user identification fields which are also located within user records in the

user data table, thus permitting the use of the system by a plurality of e-mail users.

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~~42~~. (New) The system of claim ⁵~~41~~, wherein the message records include message bodies from said sent and/or received e-mail messages.

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~~43~~. (New) The system of claim ⁶~~42~~, wherein the system further comprises a topic data table and a message-topic relationship data table for the purpose of enabling the organization of e-mail messages under one or more topics without requiring the storage of more than one copy of a message body for each e-mail message within the system.

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~~44~~. (New) The system of claim ¹~~37~~, wherein said system enables the use of positive spam filtering by automatically parsing correspondent identification information from a received e-mail message and comparing the correspondent identification information to correspondent identification information contained in correspondent records located within the correspondent data table.

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~~45~~. (New) The system of claim ¹⁰~~44~~, wherein if the parsed correspondent identification information matches correspondent identification information contained within the correspondent data table, the system automatically saves at least a portion of the received e-mail message within the message data table and automatically creates a record within the message-correspondent relationship data table to link the correspondent record with the at least a portion of the received e-mail message stored within the message data table.

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¹²/~~46~~. (New) The system of claim ¹⁰/~~44~~, wherein the system prompts an e-mail user to store or delete at least a portion of the received e-mail message if the parsed correspondent identification information does not match correspondent identification information contained within the correspondent data table.

¹³/~~47~~. (New) The system of claim ¹²/~~46~~, wherein if the e-mail user chooses to store at least a portion of the received e-mail message, the system stores correspondent identification information parsed from the received e-mail message within a correspondent record in the correspondent data table, stores at least a portion of the received e-mail message in the message data table, and creates a record within the message-correspondent relationship data table to link the correspondent record with the at least a portion of the received e-mail message stored within the message data table.

¹⁴/~~48~~. (New) The system of claim ¹³/~~47~~, wherein the system prompts the user to confirm and/or revise correspondent information before storing such information within a correspondent record in the correspondent data table.

¹⁵/~~49~~. (New) The system of claim ¹/~~37~~, wherein the system provides for efficient storage of e-mail messages by comparing a portion of a sent and/or received e-mail message which is intended to be stored to previously stored portions of sent and/or received messages stored within the message data table, and if a newly sent and/or received message portion matches a previously stored portion, instead of storing the portion of the sent and/or received e-mail

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message intended to be stored, creating a link to said previously stored portion by creating a message-correspondent relationship record within the message-correspondent relationship data table.

¹⁶~~50~~. (New) The system of claim ¹⁵~~49~~, wherein the portion of a sent and/or received e-mail message is an attachment to the e-mail.

¹⁷~~51~~. (New) The system of claim ¹~~37~~, wherein the system is located within an e-mail user's client computer.

¹⁸~~52~~. (New) The system of claim ¹~~37~~, wherein the system is located on a server computer for use by a plurality of e-mail users via a plurality of client computers.

53. (New) A computer program embodied on a computer-readable medium which is used in a system for the correspondent-centric management of e-mail messages which are sent and/or received by users of the system, said program comprising:

- a) a code segment that parses information from a sent and/or received e-mail message;
- b) a code segment that stores portions of the sent and/or received e-mail messages as message records within a message data table;
- c) a code segment that stores correspondent information from the sent and/or received e-mail message within correspondent records which include information related to correspondents of users of the system; and,

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d) a code segment that stores message-correspondent relationship records which link portions of sent and/or received e-mail messages within the message data table to correspondent records within the correspondent data table,

wherein the message-correspondent relationship records within the message-correspondent relationship data table include message identification fields which relate to portions of sent and/or received e-mail messages stored within the message data table, and wherein message-correspondent relationship records within the message-correspondent relationship data table further include correspondent identification fields which relate to correspondent records within the correspondent data table.

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54. (New) The computer program of claim 26, further including for the purpose of positive spam filtering:

e) a code segment that compares correspondent identification information parsed from a received e-mail to records within the correspondent data table; and,

f) a code segment that automatically saves a portion of the received e-mail message within the message data table if the correspondent identification information parsed from a received e-mail matches correspondent identification information contained within the correspondent data table.

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